

CAMPUS INSIDER

POWERFUL PARTNERSHIPS ELEVATE LEARNING

By Symone C. Skrzycki

Engineering Rich Relationships

Amid the groundbreaking discoveries taking place at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology in Terre Haute is an emphasis on the personal side of science: connecting students and employers.

“One of the things we’ve noticed is that as the competition for technically-trained talent has increased, corporations are looking for deeper ways to engage students before they graduate,” shares vice president of corporate engagement Elizabeth Hagerman.



Those types of partnerships are taking shape at Rose-Hulman’s new Office of Corporate Engagement, which will coordinate projects among four of the institution’s units – academic affairs, career services, institutional advancement and Rose-Hulman Ventures.

“Now that we’re all talking to each other, we can create so many more opportunities for each other across the board,” Hagerman proclaims. “It will make it a lot easier for a company to come to Rose-Hulman, know who to interface with and develop these deep relationships that serve a big purpose for both groups. Companies are excited because they get to make a bigger impression on our students and their potential talent pipeline earlier in the game.”

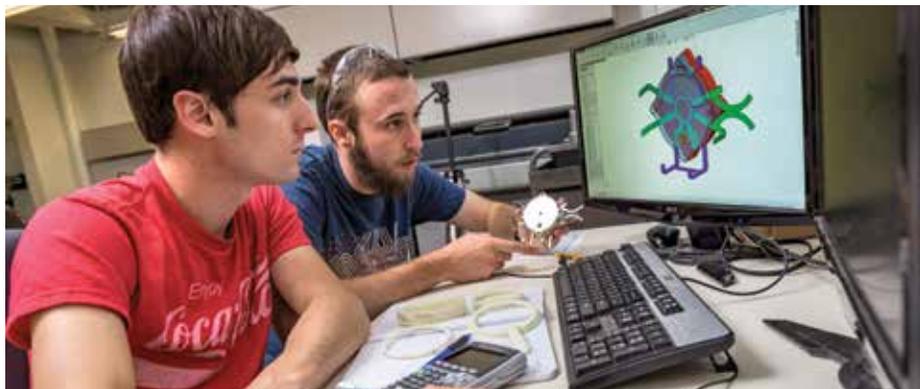
Indiana-based Angie’s List – which provides consumer reviews of service companies in a variety of categories – will be one of the first partners. The goal is to “explore creative ways to engage students with Angie’s List to get them excited about the company and industry, all while enriching their skill sets.”

Hagerman has a personal connection to Rose-Hulman, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering.

Recalling her days as an undergraduate, she observes, “A big part of what I didn’t quite understand was exactly how my engineering skill sets could impact the world, and how I could take my personality plus my engineering skill sets and really make an impact on people.”

Helping today’s students make that connection inspires her.

“The more students interface with these external constituents – whether it’s a corporation or a non-profit organization – earlier in their career, the better prepared they will be to contribute to and enjoy their careers,” she asserts.



Aspiring engineers, mathematicians and others at Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology enhance their expertise via hands-on projects (top) – many with industry or corporate clients. A common route involves partnerships with Rose-Hulman Ventures.

RESOURCE: Elizabeth Hagerman, Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology, at www.rose-hulman.edu

Lighting the Way to a ‘Bright’ Future

Brilliant minds shone as Huntington University (HU) rolled out its Bright Star program.

The competition – which revolved around finding creative ways to bring about positive change at the campus – was open to faculty and staff, and generated 28 proposals. Eligible submissions were required to meet criteria involving timeframe (the project must be implemented relatively quickly) and funding (it could cost as little as \$1,000 or as much as \$25,000 to realize).

The four winners each received a \$500 stipend.

“Sometimes we’re very student focused, as we should be, but we don’t want to forget that some of the best ideas can come from our faculty and staff,” contends vice president for strategy Ann McPherrren. “There needs to be ways to encourage and reward that.”

Bright Star grew out of HU’s Faith Forward 2022 long-range strategic plan, which commemorates the school’s upcoming 125th anniversary.

Shining ‘Stars’:

- Creation of a master of fine arts degree in digital media and film, and in digital media and producing
- Do-it-yourself interdisciplinary majors
- Role-immersion games, which pose the question, “How could we (take) the natural interest that students of today have in competitive social games and use that in a classroom social setting to enhance scholarly learning?”
- High School Student Scholarship Day. Expands the annual Academic Research Forum to include visits from prospective students

McPherrren is delighted by how her colleagues embraced the program.

“People are busy doing their day-to-day jobs. When you put something like this out there, (we wondered), ‘Would we get responses?’ When we had 28 developed proposals – that was very encouraging. Folks celebrated the (people) that won and the ideas that came forth. It was very encouraging and we got a lot of good buy-in. It’s certainly something that we’ll continue.”

RESOURCES: Ann McPherrren, Huntington University, at www.huntington.edu

Mentors Help Scholars Sharpen Skills, Stay on Track

Jala Bennie, a bubbly sophomore at Indiana State University (ISU), envisions a career in epidemiology. She credits the Scholar Coaching Initiative with helping to build confidence along her journey.

Launched in 2014 at three institutions – ISU, Ivy Tech (at 25 campuses) and Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI) – it helps freshmen navigate their new world by assigning them success coaches. They communicate via phone, text, email or other electronic platforms. Joining the initiative as partners during its second year are Indiana University East and Indiana University Kokomo.

The Scholar Coaching Initiative, supported by USA Funds, aspires to boost retention rates for participants in the 21st Century Scholars program, a needs- and performance-based effort that provides students with the opportunity to earn up to a four-year scholarship at an Indiana college or university.

“The one thing coaches really work on is making sure students develop the cognitive and non-cognitive skills for success,” explains Chris Enstrom, director of postsecondary engagement at the Indiana Commission for Higher Education, which is overseeing the program. “One of the hallmarks of Inside Track’s model (the company that designed the program) is that after the first year, these students are equipped with skills that will serve them well as far as completing college and in their professional careers as well.”

The goal isn’t to replace campus resources (e.g., financial aid offices, academic



The 21st Century Scholar program has provided full tuition scholarships for 70,000-plus low-income Hoosier students. A banquet in December celebrating the program’s 25th anniversary shared many stories.

advising, student support services and tutoring), but to raise awareness and engagement.

Bennie, one of 2,100-plus low-income students who took part in the Scholar Coaching Initiative’s first year, calls her mentor “my own motivational person.”

“I’m truly grateful for 21st Century. They took it a step further in making sure I had a success coach to talk to. We were really close as far as on a personal level, a school level and all of that.”

Bennie is one of many Scholar Coaching Initiative success stories.

ISU retained more than 62% of coached freshmen Scholars (from their first to second year), while Ivy Tech reached 45.7%. That’s

a 3.8% increase over the former’s three-year historical average and an 8.8% increase for Ivy Tech. In addition, 61 of 100 Scholars returned to IUPUI for their second year.

Joshua Fenton is an Ivy Tech student with a passion for journalism (he plans to transfer after earning his associate’s degree). He enjoyed discussing goals with his mentor and the insightful tips she shared.

“It was good that you could vent to somebody about what was going on with you in college and it wasn’t like you had to do it all on your own,” he comments, his voice full of enthusiasm. “Hearing a different perspective on things helps you grow as a student.”

RESOURCES: Chris Enstrom, Indiana Commission for Higher Education, at www.in.gov/che



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